



INSIGHT

Trial Exam Paper

2010

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Written examination

Sample responses

This book presents:

- sample responses
- general tips and guidelines for approaching short answer questions and essay writing questions
- mark allocations

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General tips for short answer questions

- *Read the entire question and do not just try to answer from key words.*
- *Make sure that you refer to the line numbers in the texts provided.*
- *Be conscious of how many marks the questions are worth and put in detail and time accordingly.*
- *It is acceptable to answer in dot points or single words/phrases if you are running out of time but it is advisable to answer in fluent prose.*

SECTION 1

Text 1 – Written Text

Question 1

Identify **two** examples of different methods used in the text to refer to female politicians and explain how each helps to create cohesion in the text.

Sample Response

Any of the following:

- Names of specific individuals, eg. ‘Jenny Macklin, Minister for Families’ (1.11); ‘Minister for the Status of Women, Tanya Plibersek’ (1.20) and ‘Ms Plibersek’ (1.28); ‘Julie Bishop, deputy Liberal leader’ (1.24), then ‘Julie Bishop’ (1.37), then ‘Ms Bishop’ (1.40, 1.46); ‘Julia Gillard’ (1.31); ‘justice and customs spokeswoman, Sussan Ley’ (1.33), then just ‘Ley’ (1.36, 1.37).
- Lexical cohesion: the same group of female politicians are being referenced, and names reduce from the complexity of full name and title to mere surnames (a kind of *ellipsis* to avoid repetition of lengthy phrases). Examples include the references to Tanya Plibersek (1.20, 1.28), Julie Bishop (1.24, 1.37, 1.40, 1.46) and Sussan Ley (1.33, 1.36, 1.37).
- An emphasis on a politically correct tone via the frequent and even ostentatious use of the title ‘Ms’ (1.28, 1.40, 1.46) is contrasted with frequent references to ‘feminist record’ (1.7–8) and ‘complicated feminist parliamentary formation’ (1.38–39), creating cohesion in terms of the general semantic content of the gender inequality issues being discussed.
- ‘woman trouble’ (1.3), ‘Coalition chicks’ (1.4), ‘senior sheilas’ (1.6), ‘Liberal chicks’ (1.32). ‘Liberal-minded ladies’ (1.16–17) refers to potential voters and new recruits, but perhaps not necessarily to current politicians.
- There are dysphemistic and politically incorrect connotations to the use of ‘chicks’ (1.4, 1.32) and ‘sheilas’ (1.6) to describe important women in the public sphere of Parliament. The use of ‘senior’ (1.6) is somewhat oxymoronic/antithetical. ‘Coalition’ (1.4) and ‘Liberal’ (1.32) – terms of prestige – paired with the diminutive and dismissive terms ‘chicks’ and ‘sheilas’ also evince a contrast between a formal and an informal tone to create a cohesive humorous tone.
- General contribution to sarcastic, humorous, satirical tone of the writer, eg. the phrase ‘woman trouble’ where the sarcasm and humour come from the dual meaning in the use of this phrase for euphemistic reference to the taboo subject of female bodily functions to mock the traditional conservative position of the Liberal party.

- Limited use of pronouns ('her', 'she') and entirely anaphoric references provide clarity as to who is being referred to in a complicated social interaction, but also create a kind of humorous over-emphasis (eg. lines 36–39).
- Interesting to note that the four connotative collocations occur in the first portion of text, with only one name; the remainder of the text uses almost entirely names with no connotative adjectives attached (except 'Liberal chicks' l.32).
- Names occur more frequently as the article becomes more narrative/declarative, explaining events in Parliament on a particular day.

4 marks

Mark allocation

- 2 marks for two examples with line numbers.
- 2 marks for analysis.

Note: *Any of the above points with explanation would be acceptable.*

Question 2

'Malcolm Turnbull launched the 'Engaging Women' campaign to reach out to Liberal-minded ladies, although this enterprise had an early setback; the chap retained to handle the PR had to be sacked in June after 'engaging women' rather too directly at the Press Gallery Ball by means of a liquored-up, indiscriminate funbag-grabbing spree.' (lines 16–19)

- a. Explain the effect of any **two** of the following syntactic features as they appear in the above sentence:
- repetition
 - parallelism
 - use of semi-colon
 - listing

Sample Response

Two of the following:

- Repetition of phrase 'engaging women' as both a title and euphemism (l.16, l.18).
- Parallelism of named politician Malcolm Turnbull (l.16) trying to conduct a formal PR 'campaign' whereas his unnamed appointed representative 'the chap' (l.17) creates an informal PR disaster.
- Use of semicolon as ellipsed conjunction (l.17) to create two connected complex sentences (technically a compound-complex sentence).
- Use of listing to create a tone of sarcastic humour and to emphasise the inappropriateness of the 'chap's' behaviour with a series of informal and overly casual, negatively connoted adjectives – 'liquored up, indiscriminate funbag-grabbing spree'(l.19).

2 marks

Mark allocation

- 1 mark for each explanation.

Note: *In addition to identifying two syntactic features in the sentence, students **must** discuss their effect to receive full marks.*

- b. Name and provide examples of language features from **two other, different** subsystems in the same sentence.

Sample Response

Two of the following:

- **Semantics:** euphemistic pun of ‘engaging women’ and title of campaign (l.16, l.18); pun on ‘Liberal-minded’ (l.16) as being both open-minded (particularly sexually, given the ‘funbag-grabbing’, l.19) and politically sympathetic to the Liberal party (also might be considered an inferred reference to the meaning of the cliché collocation ‘small-l liberal’); negative connotations of informal/overly casual adjectives ‘liquored-up, indiscriminate funbag-grabbing spree’ (l.19) with formal context of public political event like a ‘Press Gallery Ball’ (l.19) – Broad language in a Cultivated context.
- **Discourse:** euphemism/double speak of ‘engaging women’ (l.18) and ‘early setback’ (l.17), which might be interpreted as mimicry of political language patterns to create humour; satirical commentary on expected or predictable inappropriate behaviour of politicians involving drunkenness, overt sexual behaviour and impulsivity in public (l.19); use of politically correct tone to create satire on politicians (euphemisms, use of ‘Ms’); contrast of euphemistic ‘engaging women’ (l.16) with direct, blunt statement that ‘the chap...had to be sacked’ (l.17–18); connotations of anonymity for ‘the chap’ (l.17) rather than a respectful title or precise identification of the culprit (perhaps implying that his sins fall on Turnbull’s head as the leader of the party).
- **Morphology:** frequent use of compound phrases such as ‘Liberal-minded’ (l.16–17), ‘liquored-up’ (l.19) and ‘funbag-grabbing’ (l.19); slang of ‘funbag’ (l.19) as a reasonably new, slightly derogatory compound word for breasts.
- **Lexicology (may also be referred to by students as Morphology):** use of political terminology, slang and jargon – ‘campaign’, ‘Malcolm Turnbull’, ‘launched’ and ‘Liberal’ (l.16); ‘enterprise’ and ‘early setback’ (l.17); ‘Press Gallery’ (l.19) and abbreviations like ‘PR’ (l.18). Some of these lexical items have other uses (especially ‘launched’ l.16) but become jargon in this context; choice of complementing verbs ‘to reach out’ (l.16) ‘to handle’ (l.17–18) and ‘grabbing’ (l.19).
- **Phonology:** use of consonance and alliteration with frequent l’s (‘Malcolm Turnbull’ l.16, ‘launched’ l.16, ‘Liberal-minded ladies’ l.16–17, Press Gallery Ball l.19) and g’s (‘engaging women’ l.16, ‘funbag-grabbing’ l.19).

4 marks

Mark allocation

- 2 marks for each feature and explanation.

Note: *Each feature needs to be named and explained.*

Question 3

Comment on the tone of the article and how the use of connotations contributes to the author's purpose.

Sample Response

The tone is satirical/sarcastic.

- The author's purpose is to satirise the behaviour of politicians and to highlight the tough balancing act required of conservative Liberal politicians to support both traditional views on gender roles for women of their mainly conservative voters and also deal with the reality of female politicians in the workplace.
- The author is also satirising the general tenor of politicians' behaviour – and readers' low expectations – such as unacceptable public behaviour, drunkenness, lewdness, poorly researched speeches, off-the-cuff speaking errors and the need for the Liberal party to adjust to being in Opposition after so many years in Government.
- She does this by using stylistic features of political language such as tone, political correctness, doublespeak, euphemism, formality and jargon.

The connotations are:

- a general sense of criticism about the lack of women in Parliament and a recognition that women on both sides of the political divide have a hard time being successful in Canberra.
- that the author is taking a sarcastic and satirical attitude towards the people and events she is describing, undercutting them with her choice of connotated adjectives and verbs..

Examples include:

- 'chicks', 'sheilas' – informal, overly casual language, dismissive and/or derogatory of women's achievements or contributions (1.4, 1.6, 1.32).
- 'woman trouble' (1.3) has a negative, double meaning, often used to refer to the taboo subject of women's health issues or to the problems a man has with his wife or girlfriend. It implies that the Liberal party still responds to women as potential sexual partners first and as people second (the government has 'good relationship'; the Coalition has 'trouble').
- 'fair share' (1.5) – connection with Australian values and implied criticism that 'fair go' does not apply to both genders.
- 'high-level taunting' (1.7) – the government is going to make a meal of the Coalition; reference to formality and supposed prestige of context contrasted with schoolyard connotations of 'taunting'.
- 'went to the barricades to defend their feminist record' (1.7–8) – sarcasm (draws attention to the Coalition's lack of a record of 'feminist' policies); connotations of defensiveness, ie. Coalition know they don't have a strong track record in this area; also implies overreaction in the sense of raising arms against a relatively minor threat.
- 'lavish kiss', 'surprised' (1.11) – government minister not expecting displays of affection from Opposition; also slightly sexist/condescending of a man to address a powerful female publically in such a personal, intimate way. There is a connection to 'woman trouble' and an implication that the Coalition don't know how to handle women appropriately in public or formal contexts, or how to treat them with respect and as equals rather than sex objects.

- ‘one-man commentary’ (l.12) – Wilson only one to speak thusly; ‘loose series of mutterings’ (l.13) suggests that the speech was not very good; title is old-fashioned and sexist but ‘tentatively’ (l.13) implies humour and sarcasm in the attachment of such a label, which directly identifies the content of the speech to emphasise its inappropriateness.
- ‘they have been trying’ (l.15) implies failure, lack of success.
- ‘Liberal-minded ladies’ (l.16–17) – pun on ‘Liberal-minded’ as being both open-minded (particularly sexually, given the ‘funbag-grabbing’) and politically sympathetic to the Liberal party. (Also perhaps an inferred reference to the meaning of the cliché collocation ‘small-l liberal’).
- ‘early setback’ (l.17) – minimises problem.
- ‘slightly out of date, then’ (l.22–23) creates emphasis and sarcasm through understatement, almost irony.
- ‘All of a sudden, something snapped’, ‘stalked’ and ‘withering’ (l.24–26) suggest strength and dominance uncharacteristic of a female. These are typically more masculine descriptors; however a ‘considerable inventory’ of ‘withering looks’ conveys more feminine qualities.
- ‘allowed’ (l.29, l.33) to describe female Liberals needing ‘permission’ of their male counterparts to be active in Parliament suggests a pattern of the Liberal party quashing women on both sides of the house.
- ‘frontbench cheap seats’ (l.35) connotes rowdy, less controlled and immature behaviour. The prestige of ‘frontbench’ is undercut by cheapness and also indicates close physical proximity to ‘the action’.
- The use of titles connotes prestige and status, undercut by the treatment the women receive from other politicians, eg. ‘Ms’ (l.28), ‘Minister for Status of Women’ (l.20), ‘Minister for Families’ (l.11), ‘deputy Liberal leader’ (l.24), ‘justice and customs spokeswoman’ – note: not Minister – (l.33).
- The repeated use of ‘busy’ (l.36) and busily (l.34) to describe Susan Ley conveys typically feminine qualities and carries connotations of hard work and of trying to catch up to other women (possibly linked to the fact that her title is not as powerful as the others).
- ‘complicated feminist parliamentary formation’ (l.38–39) implies the Liberal party is trying (perhaps too hard) to make up lost ground, that the effect is manufactured, a tactic rather than a natural progression of a broader policy, in contrast with the earlier reference to a ‘rush of’ (l.6) women in government.

4 marks

Mark allocation

- 1 mark for identification of tone.
- 1 mark for identification of purpose.
- 1 mark for correct identification of connotated words.
- 1 mark for good description of how the tone contributes to the purpose.

Question 4

Discuss the patterns of information flow used in this article to communicate effectively with readers. Explain the writer's purpose in managing the information flow in this manner. Provide **two** examples to support your comments.

Sample Response

There is a very clear pattern of foregrounding. Sentences open with either a noun phrase, often 'the something' or a named person, eg. 'Tony', 'Malcolm', 'Ms Bishop' (1.3, 1.6, 1.10, 1.12, 1.16, 1.20, 1.27, 1.33, 1.40, 1.45) or adverbs ('each' 1.9, 'All of a sudden' 1.24, 'Twenty minutes later' 1.31, 'Suddenly' 1.32, 'At one point' 1.36, 'This turned out' 1.43, 'Really' 1.46.)

- A major exception is the use of the placeholder 'It' in line 4 (which could be called a pronoun acting as a noun phrase, but is acting as placeholder instead).
- End-focus is used to give prominence to the satirical insight of the writer (most complex ideas, humour and inference occur in the closing stages of the sentences), but front focus is used to promote clarity, demonstrated by the way in which new speakers are identified clearly and early in each sentence, eg. by the frequent use of names (1.7–8, 1.12–14, 1.18–19, 1.22–23, 1.29–30, 1.33–35, 1.36–39, 1.46).
- Typical topic–comment 'zig zag' or interlocked pattern is not dominant. There is little linkage between the content at the end of one sentence and the opening remarks of the next, perhaps because of the writer's desire to ensure simplicity and clarity of expression for optimum communication with an audience of newspaper readers. Complexity in the text is semantic and discourse-based rather than syntactic.
- The text seems to alternate between short, descriptive, declarative sentences (1.3, 1.9, 1.15, 1.24, 1.31, 1.32, 1.45, 1.46) which are typical of, and suitable for, newspaper writing, and very long complex sentences making short paragraphs. There is limited use of unusual intrusions like clefting, which makes for easier reading and clarity in the writing.
- Typically complex sentence structures are evident, with many clauses and a wide range of unusual conjunctions (not just the usual suspects!). There are comparatively few compound sentences and an atypical use of compounding, eg. use of semicolon instead of conjunction (1.13, 1.17, 1.22, 1.40) and 'full stop And' construction (1.7).
- There are many qualifying adverbial clauses, especially regarding time: 'All of a sudden' (1.24), 'Twenty minutes later' (1.31), 'Suddenly' (1.32), 'At one point' (1.36), 'Really' (1.46).
- There is an interesting and stylistic use of front focus and 'given to new' information flow, beginning with a noun phrase (often a person and their title) and leading on to new insights. Some prior understanding of current politicians and political framework is expected, although the frequent listing of full titles reduces the exclusion of non-understanding readers.
- There are lots of embedded clauses encapsulated by double commas, rather than brackets, an increasingly uncommon feature of Modern SAE as it is more complex and therefore more challenging both to read and to write clearly, eg. 1.6, 1.10–11, 1.36–39, 1.46.
- The explanation should give some discussion of the context of the text as a newspaper opinion piece, political commentary and/or entertaining column. Facts, events and people are necessary to this largely narrative style so declarative sentences dominate and support the author's purpose of conveying information clearly. The writer entertains with a witty and sarcastic tone while also providing insight and perspective

into current political events, policies and personalities (this could be described as a somewhat didactic purpose). The use of end-weight adds to the comedic and dramatic tone of the text.

4 marks

Mark allocation

- 1 mark for each example and line number.
- 1 mark for each explanation.

Question 5

Discuss the use of politically correct language by both the writer of the article and the Members of Parliament quoted in the article. What is the purpose of such language in this context?

Sample Response

- The need for political correctness in such a public forum as Parliament is commonly assumed. Modern social values have changed such that overtly discriminatory language is no longer tolerated. The writer of this article purposefully uses language that is out of place in her article ('chicks' 1.4, 1.32; 'sheilas' 1.6) to show how prejudice may still be present even when language has been 'cleaned up'.
- The expectation that important public representatives (such as Federal politicians) will adhere to standards of political correctness is used to satirise the Opposition. The gap between these expectations and Liberal policies is highlighted through the many inferences that they are out-of-date and old-fashioned, such as the comments about Wilson Tuckey's speech (1.12–14) and the reference to Ms Plibersek quoting from the Opposition website where they are still listed as 'the Government' (1.20–23). This is particularly clear with the framing of the anecdote at the conclusion of the article where Julie Bishop's success is undermined by the age of the speech from which she is quoting (1.40–44).
- In particular, this article calls into question the extent to which 'politically correct' language is used for simple expediency and does not reflect real cultural change, by noting inconsistencies and errors in the politicians' use of politically correct language, and contrasting their attempts to use it with their politically incorrect behaviour. For example they 'went to the barricades to defend their feminist record' (1.7–8) but Tony Abbott 'blew a lavish kiss' to Jenny Macklin (1.10–11), while the content of Wilson Tuckey's speech is summarised as 'a loose series of mutterings tentatively entitled: "They Just Want a Job on the Weekends When Dad's Home to Look After the Kids."' (1.12–14) which is clearly a very outdated way of considering women's reasons for working. The decidedly politically incorrect reduction of women to sexual objects is also inferred in the 'engaging women' anecdote (1.16–19). This relationship between language and change (can one create change simply by changing the language used?) is examined through the issue of gender equality in the political sphere.
- This contrast is also addressed in the tone with which the main issue of the article is discussed. The dialogue under discussion occurs because an article appeared in the *Herald Sun* suggesting that women in the Liberal party were not equally represented during question time. Criticism of this behaviour is underlined through the author's use of such words as 'allowed to ask her third question for the year' (1.33–34) and the understatement of 'To be fair on the Libs, they have been trying' (1.15) where the tone clearly implies 'not hard enough' (especially when contrasted with the anecdote in the following passage; this is a clear use of information flow to contribute to readers'

understanding). Humour and sarcasm are also used to reinforce this point of view in lines 1.38–39 where ‘a complicated feminist parliamentary formation’ is described using puns on the name of the politician (Ley) and the title of the song ‘Lay Lady Lay’.

- Stereotypes about politicians are reinforced through stories of ill-preparedness, such as Julie Bishop’s failure to note how out-of-date her quote from Keating was (1.43–44) and Tanya Plibersek’s use of documents that had not been updated since the previous election (1.20–23). They are also depicted as pompous– for example, in the reference to Wilson Tuckey continuing ‘his one-man commentary on women in the workplace’ (1.12) – sexist, and prone to drunken behaviour (see Wilson Tuckey and Tony Abbott as above; also the reference to ‘engaging women’ 1.16–19).

5 marks

Mark allocation

- 2 marks for examples of politically correct language with line numbers, one from the writer and one from an MP.
- 1 mark for a discussion of the use of each example, ie. the language feature and how the example fits the description of politically correct language.
- 2 marks for analysis/discussion of purpose.

Total 23 marks

SECTION 2

Text 2 – Spoken Text

Question 6

Find **two** different examples of overlap and explain its role in cooperative conversation as seen between lines 46 and 58.

Sample Response

- Cooperative or supportive overlap indicates intimacy and familiarity between participants. Topic management is fluid with few breaks and with smooth transitions between both speakers and topics. Participants are so involved and in sync that they communicate very efficiently.
- Lines 46–47: ‘Yeah yeah yeah’ by C acts as a backchannel signal to B of agreement and encouragement for the joke in line 46.
- Lines 50–51: B begins simultaneous speech in line 51 before registering content of C’s comment in line 50, B then breaks into laughter once he does register the punch line of C’s joke.
- Cooperation is shown very clearly in lines 53–55 where participants negotiate over which answer to choose with rapid use of both simultaneity (l.54) and back channelling (‘Yeah’ l.55).

3 marks

Mark allocation

- 1 mark each for correct identification of **both** types of overlap with examples and line numbers.
- 1 mark for correct analysis.

Question 7

Identify **two** different examples of non-fluency features (other than overlap) and discuss the function of each in the transcript.

Sample Response

- Non-fluency features indicate the spontaneity and unplanned nature of the participants' responses. Some create thinking time while the participant plans their response better (or improves their response as in line 16) while others simply reflect the speed of cooperative communication. Students should discuss both functions and draw clear lines between the feature they choose and the effect of that feature. It can be contrasted with the typical fluency and planned speech of the host, A.
- Hesitation, repetition, false starts, self correction, pauses, pause fillers (it would be helpful and rewarded if students were to provide specific examples here).
- Students should avoid using overlap as an example as it has already been closely covered in the previous question.
- 1.16: self correction.
- 1.18: B repeats self to avoid lack of clarity due to overlap with line 17.
- 1.20: pause and stammer = could be called either hesitation or false start.
- 1.25: pause for dramatic effect, ditto 1.32.
- 1.36: pauses for phrasing emphasis and drama.
- 1.68: unusual non-fluency pause filler from host A in monologue section; ditto 1.69, 1.77.

4 marks

Mark allocation

- 2 marks for each example and discussion.

Question 8

Discuss the dominance of declarative utterances in the transcript and in particular their use to support the purpose of participant A between lines 1 to 11 and lines 68 to 80.

Sample Response

- It is interesting to note that, despite the 'quiz show' format, the participants rarely use anything other than declarative sentences, particularly the host, A, who uses declaratives with interrogative purpose. This is assisted by the 'multiple choice' style of question where participants are choosing between three possibly correct statements.
- A is managing the floor and the turn-taking and the declaratives between lines 1–11 allow him to direct the action. By providing the framework of the questions and the alternatives from which participants can choose, A is guiding the interaction and moving the program along. Note how he does not stop to respond to B's interjections or interact with him but maintains his hold on the floor by continuing to speak. Use of the word 'right' in line 1 and 'Here's your fact' in line 3 also inject pace and drive into the conversation. Use of the option A (1.6), B (1.9) or C (1.11) format for answers also creates forward momentum.
- This contrasts with lines 68–80 in the more loose, casual, less structured part of the program, where participants are expected to interact and to be entertaining and funny. A provides more leeway for other participants to take and hold the floor and his own speech is less planned and more spontaneous (more non-fluency features present).

Declarative sentences still dominate, however, as the purpose of ‘being entertaining’ in this context involves telling funny stories. Therefore a narrative style, where new information is provided, is evident.

- There is a kind of competitive, cumulative one-upmanship in play between participants (including A in line 80) during lines 75–87, where each tries to give a funny one-line statement that is more outrageous and funny than the previous one. Declarative sentence structures also support this type of humour, as noted above, which requires participants to provide information, be entertaining and to tell a story funnier than the previous, etc.
- A limited number of interrogatives and exclamatives appear in other parts of the text, for example in the exchange where participants are deciding on their answer: ‘Pick C?’ (1.54), ‘what do you reckon?’ (1.52) and ‘What do you think?’ (1.56).

4 marks

Mark allocation

- 2 marks for an explanation of the dominance of declarative utterances.
- 2 marks for identification of A’s purpose in each section.

Question 9

Identify **two** different prosodic features in the transcript and discuss the function of each.

Sample Response

- Lots of ^stress! creates emphasis (‘extreme’ 1.15, 1.36; ‘saved’ 1.73; ‘entire’ 1.80), draws attention (‘foolproof’ 1.18; ‘long’ 1.75), conveys emotions like surprise and sarcasm (‘extreme’ 1.36; ‘dead’ 1.80).
- Pauses for emphasis: 1.32, 1.36, 1.60.
- Pause for thinking time: 1.68, 1.69, 1.77.
- Lengthened vowel sounds as an intensifier for emphasis: ‘extreme’ 1.15; ‘entire’ 1.80; ‘amazing’ 1.85.
- Voice quality laughter (1.34, 1.80) conveys both emotion and semantic content without pausing or giving up the floor.
- Fast speech (covers a lot of information quickly without interrupting the flow of interaction): 1.61, 1.74, 1.77.
- Rising intonation
 - surprise – ‘What!’ 1.67; ‘Wow’ 1.78.
 - question – ‘there’ 1.42; ‘pick’ C 1.54; ‘what do you reckon?’ 1.52; ‘What do you think?’ 1.56.
- Falling intonation
 - doubt – ‘Okay’, 1.59.
 - turn-taking, yielding the floor – 1.11.
- indrawn breath – 1.63, 1.75; surprise, pause, suspense.

4 marks

Mark allocation

- 1 mark for each correct feature.
- 1 mark each for accurate description of their purposes.

Question 10

Discuss the ways in which turn-taking in this conversation reflects the context and the relationship between the participants.

Sample Response

- Turn-taking is fluent and relatively orderly; participants are recording a television show and aim for cooperation and clarity.
- The spontaneous and unplanned (unscripted) nature of the interaction means that the conversation is not always defined and rigidly ordered; note the unclear section of text in line 24. Some parts of the conversation seem to be planned and scripted however, such as A's questioning and revelation of the answer.
- A holds the power to hold and distribute the turns. Using participants' names in line 2 indicates clearly that they will be expected to take the floor shortly and should pay attention to the content of A's speech. The use of 'Right' in line 1 clearly indicates A will hold the floor now. In line 60 A uses his role as host to regain the floor, introducing his turn with 'The correct answer is'. A often uses adverbs to interrupt other speakers and regain the floor: for example 'Actually' (1.77), 'And then' (1.80). Once A uses repetition as a kind of backchannel signal to regain the floor: 'Weekend at Jimi's it was called' (1.83).
- The intimacy and casual nature of the conversation means that the overlap is cooperative and the conversation fluent despite the presence of the TV cameras (or perhaps *because of* the participants' understanding that their purpose is to entertain).
- The participants' relationship is casual and friendly, apparently intimate, informal and cooperative. They are assisting each other to answer the question set by A and although there is some competition between them for the better story and the better joke, (and after line 68 this includes A), it is a friendly rivalry that is geared towards meeting the purpose of being entertaining through phatic interaction.

7 marks

Mark allocation

- 2 marks for description of turn-taking (fluent, cooperative).
- 1 mark for discussion of context (TV show).
- 2 marks for effect of context on interaction (entertainment, clarity).
- 2 marks for discussion of relationship between participants (intimate, casual, informal, cooperative).

Total 22 marks

SECTION 3 - Essay

Question 11

Electronic communication is so prevalent nowadays that it is undermining the very nature of both written and spoken language. Discuss. *Refer to at least two subsystems in your response.*

“If we should be worrying about anything to do with the future of English, it should be not that the various strands will drift apart but that they will grow indistinguishable. And what a sad, sad loss that would be.”

Bill Bryson, 1990

On Twitter prompts

A correspondent from Valleywag wrote last week to ask if I saw anything interesting in the Twitter decision to change its prompt – from 'What are you doing?' to 'What's happening?'

I do think this is interesting. My impression is that Twitter has become steadily more discursive over the past few months, with people maintaining threads and introducing a great deal more interaction, rather than posting isolated tweets. As a result the focus has shifted from the individual to the group, and a more open question is required to capture this emphasis. 'What-doing' looks inward. 'What-happening' looks outward. It's a natural development, it seems to me. I love one of the reactions to the Valleywag post. Someone suggests that a much simpler prompt will emerge one day: 'Sup?'

posted by David Crystal on his blog, <http://david-crystal.blogspot.com/>, Monday 23 November 2009 at 10:37am

I h8 txt msgs: How texting is wrecking our language

Texters are: vandals who are doing to our language what Genghis Khan did to his neighbours eight hundred years ago. They are destroying it: pillaging our punctuation; savaging our sentences; raping our vocabulary. And they must be stopped.

John Humphrys, *The Daily Mail*, 2007

But good writing exists in myriad forms. ... It even exists under the reasonably terrifying heading of "new media". In 140 characters or less, a generation of slightly narcissistic microbloggers tell anyone who listens what they think of the world. But those who dismiss such activities as mindless chattering miss the point. How is it not simply an extension of Hemingway's famed six-word story? I checked - his "For sale: baby shoes, never worn" is only 33 characters. It's too easy to dismiss texting and the internet and iPhones as the death of literature and fine writing as we know it. But microblogging can be an unmitigated delight.

Marieke Hardy, *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 19, 2009

Sample Response

This question asks you to discuss the effect of technology on modern language use, to draw distinctions between written and spoken forms and to display understanding of those differences, to discuss the effect of technology on each and to assess the worth of these changes.

Some potentially relevant topics include:

- The effect of the internet and global communication on language.
- The effect of 'new media' and highly transportable media devices such as iPods and iPhones, Blackberries, PDAs, PSPs, ordinary mobile phones, particularly as wireless internet services become more reliable/available/inexpensive. The amount of data and material that can be received and stored increases the impact on the language.
- The continuing potential impact on grammar of the shorthand language common in emails, SMSs, etc.
- The rise of blogging and the increasingly greater access to publishing (fewer restraints and 'doorkeepers' to general public publishing, for example, politicians now 'tweet' from the floor).

- The interesting new development in m-novels (novels being published in short twitter or blog bursts direct to subscribed users' mobile phones).
- Semantic changes (shifts/blends/obsolescence) due to the emergence of new technology, eg. the verbs 'to blog' and 'tweeting', and nouns such as 'download', etc.
- The increasing prevalence of nominalisation as brand names (of products and/or software) are transformed into verbs, eg. 'Twitter', 'tweet'. Have the processes of change and adaptation to new products become simpler or lazier, or are there so many more new products on the market (and so much more frequently) that the processes are being applied more uniformly in response?
- Morphological changes abound – new affixes, neologisms, new compound word combinations, borrowing, adaptation, nominalisation, etc.
- Lexical and grammatical changes, affected by space and cost limitations and by increasingly speedy, off-the-cuff and unedited written discourse.
- The possibility that electronic media is creating a more unified experience where the line between written and spoken text is irrevocably blurred.
- Discourse change – significant changes to social interaction and social expectations through the internet and software.
- The prevalence of American-centric language change due to that country's dominance in the global commercial market for technology.
- The narrowing distance between written and spoken modes – emails, texts, comments on blogs.
- The blurring of distinctions between public and private, formal and casual. Standards of 'acceptable' communication are broadening (question of whether this is good or bad thing is up to the student!).
- Concern over the decline of literacy levels in younger generational users, presumably because they are accessing fewer examples of 'correct' English. This has caused widespread debate, with the latest findings suggesting that younger children seem to be more literate than ever and that technology has helped rather than hindered this.
- The emergence of new varieties of English and modes of communication and expression causes concern for some and delight for others, though they have yet to be acknowledged as 'acceptable' mainstream alternatives.
- Identity formation and differentiation between users and non-users.

Tips

- *Students have a wide range of potential content material from which to select and will do best when they select a few representative, pertinent examples rather than attempting a more generalised discussion. Trying to cover the material too broadly will often result in a scattered, overly vague response. VCAA advice is that students can choose, if they so desire, to use only one of the prompts. They must use **at least** one.*
- *The direct references to specific new technologies in the stimulus materials should draw students to create more precise discussions and give direct examples of language changes in both the written and spoken modes.*
- *The mention of written and spoken language in the topic could also form a useful basis for the structure of the essay. Discussions about the various features of each mode and a comparison with the features of electronic communication could be very rewarding. Are the modes similar or different? Are they 'merging'? If so, how? And why?*

- *Students may adopt either a prescriptivist or descriptivist approach, arguing that technology is or is not undermining the nature of spoken and written language.*
- *That language is changing is undeniable but students may choose to argue not only the **value** of these changes, but also the **degree** of that change and suggest that while perhaps visible the actual change is, in fact, minimal.*
- *Very sophisticated responses should be well able to discuss the difference between the effect of technology on written and spoken forms as separate socio-linguistic processes and to draw successful comparisons between the features of both as well as the emerging features of electronic modes. Are there now 'electronic written' and 'electronic spoken' as well as the more traditional modes?*
- *Below are sample paragraph structures, to be used as a guide only – other structures are also acceptable.*
 - *1 mobile technology*
2 SMS
3 internet
4 impact on traditional media like film/tv.
Features of written and spoken modes would have to be discussed briefly/separately in each paragraph, and students would also have to provide some discussion of the effect of electronics on these forms.
 - *1 written mode*
2 spoken mode
3 electronic mode.
The features of the modes would be discussed at length and valued (positive/negative) in each paragraph as well as the overall effect of electronic media on the mode valued (good/bad). The final paragraph should include some discussion of the merging of the two main modes into a new form (or perhaps negate this assertion with solid evidence). A range of examples would therefore be needed in each paragraph.
- *Focus and examples should mainly be drawn from Australian use of language and Australian media.*

Question 12

Our identity is as much about how others perceive our use of language as about the language we create. Discuss. *Refer to at least two subsystems in your response.*

‘...the phenomena which make up language standardisation no longer appear so exceptional ... but become difficult to distinguish from language generally. This has an effect on our understanding of language itself, making it appear no longer to be a decontextualised system of mental calculation or signification, the ‘social’ (or more precisely, human) consequences of which are mere side effects. Manifesting identity and, even more importantly, interpreting identity, come to be seen as central to the very existence and functioning of language.’

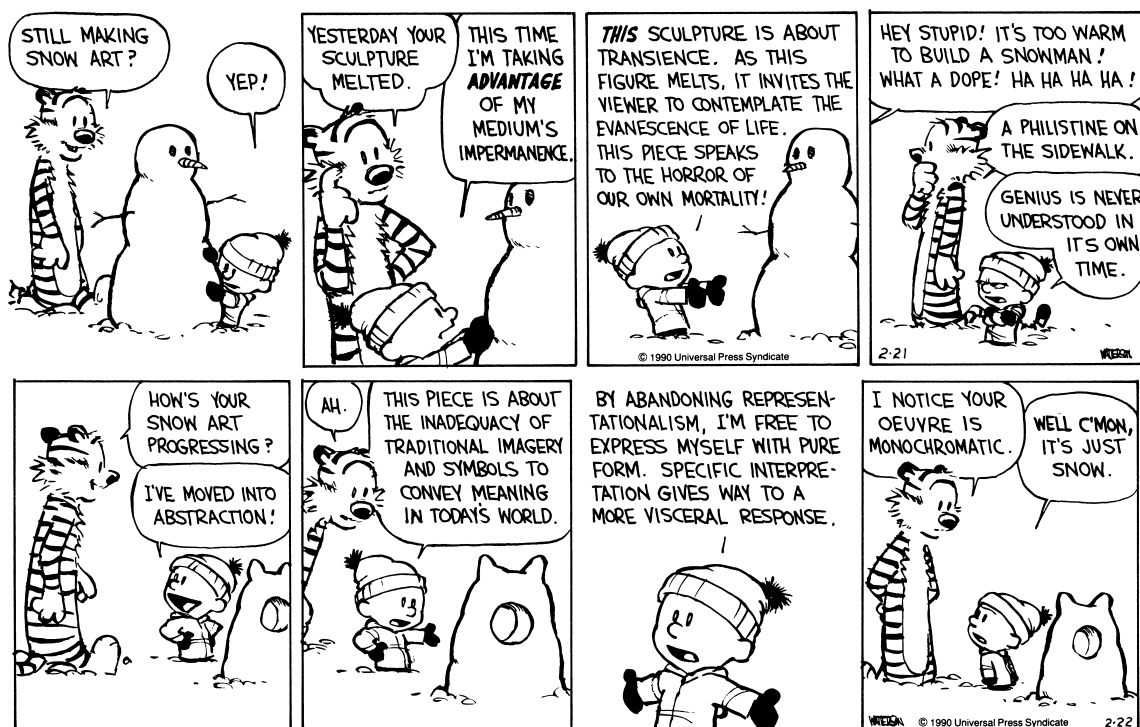
John E Joseph, *Language and Identity: National, Ethnic, Religious*, 2004

Things that say 'Melbourne' (even more than a big M)

You know you're a Melburnian when...

- You know Sunshine, Rosebud and the Caribbean Gardens are not as good as they sound.
- You've attended a children's party that had rice-paper rolls, cous cous salad, croquembouche and a pinata. ...
- It's not Noosa, it's Noysa. It's not snow it's the snoy. And it's Malvern now, not Chadstone, thanks to rezoning.
- ...- When you hear the word "Bougainville" you think of Northland.
- Your kid's favourite foods are sushi, spanakopita and felafel. Which are also the names of the three kids they sit next to at school.
- When holding a dinner party, you know the point is to serve food no one has ever heard of, from a country people didn't know existed, bought from a little shop they'll never be able to find. ...
- Pot, cantaloupe, potato cake and hook turn. Build a bridge and get over it.

Catherine Deveny, *The Age*, 19/08/09



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Sample Response

This question allows students to discuss a range of competing influences on identity creation – those generated by the user (implied) and those perceived by the audience (inferred). This includes both use- and user-related topics but goes beyond a simplistic summary of Unit 3 material. Discussion of value judgements by the audience (attitudes to varieties) about our identity is expected and anticipated by the word ‘perceive’. An exploration of the ways in which we change our identity (context) will be valuable but may not be unpacked by less able students.

Some potentially relevant topics and discussions include:

- The use of Standard Australian English as a ‘buffer variety’ that is useful to all and conforms to a neutral identity position (for example, at job interviews).
- The use of unexpected forms and the purposeful juxtaposition of atypical language patterns for effect – eg. for humour as in advertising. This is also demonstrated in the Calvin and Hobbes comic, to draw attention and to create emphasis for the point of the communication, as well as to create an aspirational new or alternate identity, as, for example, when Calvin speaks like an older art critic, rejecting the disrespect of ideas usually displayed by youth.
- The role of culture (and cultural context) in identity formation and perception, eg. ethnic Australians who slip between SAE and their ‘home’ language.
- The role of society in forming stereotypes or expectations (eg. all gay men speak in high-pitched effeminate voices) and our deliberate acceptance (eg. comics such as Julian Clary or Guy Pearce in *Priscilla*) or rejection of these for the purpose of identity creation. People like Graham Kennedy, Ellen De Generes and Portia de Rossi who work within the boundaries of the stereotypes (particularly, for example, in Ellen’s comedic routines) which are applied to them, and yet also struggle against the limitations of those stereotypes, perform an interesting kind of linguistic gymnastics that would also be worthwhile examining.
- Students may like to examine such issues as whether our language use is formed by our experiences (is it a ‘defining framework’?) or whether we choose to recreate ourselves as we would like to be (is it a ‘reporting device’ and simply our way of advertising how we wish to be perceived?). For example, the relative anonymity of internet users allows a variety of identities to be created and communicated via language choice, but does putting on a ‘mask’ change the essential nature of the language user? Examples should cover a range of identities – age, gender, sexuality, regional variation, class variation.
- Another useful line of inquiry could discuss the perceptions of non-group members about these groups. When and where and *why* is prestige accorded (or removed)? How does language use contribute to the way in which we are perceived by other people?
- The prompt material about the cultural snobbery in Melbourne would be an excellent jumping-off point for a discussion about cultural values and the ‘perceived identity’ of a city as well as its residents. In particular this could lead to a discussion of regional dialect variation within Australia such as pot/schooner/midi, cantaloupe/rockmelon, potato cake/potato scallop (and the South Australian version where it actually is a ‘cake’). There are a range of ethnic/sexual/socio-economic/regional/prestige-based prejudices contained in the sample text.

Tips

- *The new topic style looks simple but in fact hides many angles and possibilities for complexity that will suit a sophisticated thinker but may elude students who rush to the topic and deal only with the obvious. Hopefully the stimulus material will 'stimulate' these students and direct them to the potential for more complex discourse-based discussion.*
- *Students have a wide range of potential content material from which to select and will do best when they select a few representative, pertinent examples rather than attempting a more generalised discussion. Trying to cover the material too broadly will often result in a scattered, overly vague response. VCAA advice is that students can choose, if they so desire, to use only one of the prompts. They must use **at least one**.*
- *Different attitudes towards users and the complex relationship between stereotype and reality should be explored thoroughly. Modern users (particularly in this self-reflective 'ironic' era) must wrestle with the almost endless variety of dilemmas in 'who do I want to be today?' not just 'who am I?' Other people will form a response to this, and to our projections, that may or may not be the response we either anticipated or desired.*
- *Perceptive students will also note that just because we 'try' to create an identity doesn't necessarily mean we are successful. And our lack of success (satirised in pop songs like 'Pretty fly for a white guy' and films like 'The Castle' or shows like 'Kath and Kim') will be judged or/perceived in particular ways by others and contribute to their construction of our identity without our permission.*
- *Below are sample paragraph structures, to be used as a guide only – other structures are also acceptable.*
 - *1 age/respect*
 - 2 ethnicity*
 - 3 regional/cultural*
 - 4 class/economic.*
 - Each paragraph will need to contain a discussion of how users create and choose their identity, as well as the ability of users to vary their language between contexts for effect (social relationships/group marking/creating solidarity or not), and the role of the audience in that act of creation.*
 - *Alternatively, students could adopt a structure of*
 - 1 users create by conformity*
 - 2 users create by non-conformity*
 - 3 audience modifies*
 - 4 context modifies (identity is malleable).*
 - Each paragraph would then need to address a range of examples and linguistic features.*
- *Focus and examples should mainly be drawn from Australian use of language and the Australian media.*

Question 13

Standard Australian English is not a static construct but an ever changing medium that reflects the changes in the society in which it is formed. Do you agree?

"Clearly, gardens and standard languages have much in common. Both are human constructions and they share two fundamental characteristics. They are restricted by boundaries and they are also cultivated."

Kate Burridge, *Weeds in the garden of words*, 2005

"Alongside the need to reflect each local situation and identity, which fosters diversity, there is the need for mutual intelligibility, which fosters standardisation."

David Crystal, 'Emerging Englishes' in *English Teaching Professional* 14, 3–6, 2000

"Felicity Cox and Sallyanne Palethorpe have spent two years preparing the Australian Voices website. They have already nominated three dialect sub-groups: Standard Australian English, Australian Aboriginal English and Ethnocultural Australian English varieties, such as Lebanese-Australian accents.

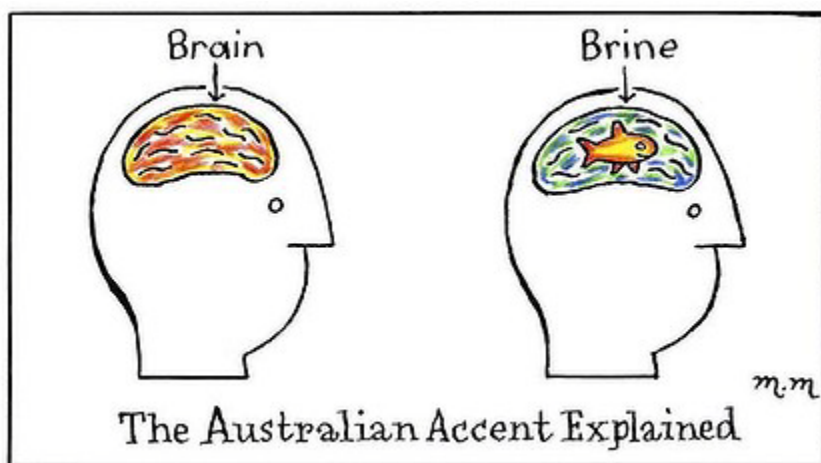
"A lot of standard Australian English speakers think that Lebanese-Australian English is not an Australian accent. But it is," said Dr Cox. "It is an expression of ethnicity but it is still distinctly Australian."

She said Australian English had changed "hugely" since the 1960s and '70s, and the voice of every person was like a time capsule of the accent where and when they grew up.

"All Australian accents have changed, but they change through the speech of young people. Once you reach your 20s, your accent doesn't change much."

Multiculturalism had meant the days of only general, broad and "cultivated" Australian accents were gone, she said. In particular, the "cultivated" accent - which is now probably most recognisable in old recordings of ABC radio announcers - has been abandoned by younger generations. "It used to be culturally advantageous to speak with a British accent," Dr Cox said. "[But] language changed, just like culture."

Amy Corderoy, 'It's all English, but vowels ain't voils' in *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 26, 2010



Matthew Martin, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2010

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Sample Response

Some potentially relevant topics and discussions include:

- The forces of language change
 - Youth, identity and generational change over time and the emergence of variation to express rejection of accepted patterns/norms, a kind of purposeful linguistic ‘otherness’, evident, for example, in the rise and fall of common slang usages to describe youthful preoccupations such as getting drunk, having sex or expressing approval. In the 60s it was ‘cool’, in the 70s ‘groovy’ or ‘far out’, in the 80s ‘bad’ and ‘phat’ and in the 90s ‘awesome’, while in the 00s terms like ‘l33t’ (for elite) drifted into the lexicon from computer geeks and hackers, and ‘amped’ from the world of rock musicians and fans. Nowadays there seems to be an increasingly ironic tone where more words are used to mean the reverse of their original meaning, like ‘bad’, or where apparently positive words can be used either way; for example, ‘all that’ which can be contextually both negative – ‘he thinks he’s all that’ – or positive – ‘she’s all that and a bag of skittles’.
 - Technology: not only the inclusion of new words (like firewall and paywall) and the shifting of old words (like mouse and networking), but the rise of a whole new dialect in SMS speak with its own morphology, truncated syntax, discourse rules and etiquette, for example, CU L8r and so on. This variety can paradoxically both speed communication (between familiar users) by ellipsing much unnecessary structure and detail, but also confuse users unfamiliar with particular common shortened forms, eg. ‘FTW’ meaning ‘for the win’ and used to express one-upmanship. The rise and success of tweeting and other social networking phenomena is in part based on – but also promotes – these variations to a wider audience.
 - Ethnicity and immigration, and differences in second generation usage and identity, a common feature in Australian English since World War II and the influx of European migrants (mainly Greek and Italian) which saw the rise of the ‘wogboy’ variation come to prominence during the 80s and find success on mainstream television. It is interesting to note from Prompt 2 that Lebanese-Australian seems to have overtaken this variation as the main element of the third most common variation according to Dr Cox’s recent work. Students may locate some examples from the recent series of *Underbelly* which has featured many Lebanese-Australian gang members. It will be interesting to watch if there are any African-Australian variations that rise from the new wave of Sudanese and African refugees, and to speculate why there are so few Vietnamese-Australian variations.
 - Aboriginal English is also noted as a distinct variation but it can be questioned whether typical features such as the use of familial tags like ‘brudda’ and ‘cuz’ have entered SAE from here or from US-based gang culture. The increasing use of simpler syntax with fewer tenses and a more prominent use of present tense in particular could be a reflection of general disinterest in sophisticated syntactic constructions by all youth or a preoccupation shared with Aboriginal cultures (who have little to no past or future tense in their languages) with the ‘now’ by current language modifiers.
 - Identity creation and the inclusion of increasingly greater examples of Broad features in Standard dialect. Perhaps due to the increasing influence of overseas dialectal variation (US, UK, NZ, etc.) the Standard form of Australian English seems to be adopting more of the readily identifiable aspects of the previously lower-prestige Broad accent, particularly with the revival of certain slang terms (dead horse, chuck, bloody, drongo, etc.) and the use of the distinctively nasal flattened vowel sounds. Successful comedies such as *Kath and Kim* and *Crocodile*

Dundee and even non-comedic entertainers such as Steve Irwin have used the distinctive Broad accent as part of their success. It is interesting to contrast this with the more even Standard dialect of The Wiggles, who have a much broader worldwide audience, and yet still include occasional Broad features such as the expression ‘bewdy mate’ and the attachment of an extra ‘r’ onto ‘tiara’.

- Group membership, inclusion and exclusion through language use, for example, the ‘gangsta’ slang in the US that is changed as soon as other parts of the culture begin to absorb it, as with the word ‘bling’. See also Youth culture above, or culturally based gang language such as that of the conflicting groups involved in the Cronulla riots, where Broad Australian and Lebanese-Australian cultural groups came into conflict.
- Social change and the increasing lack of prestige accorded to traditional authority figures and to the Cultivated accent. The ‘BBC Australia’ accent is all but gone from our broadcasters (note the number of commentators who refer to Wimbledon tennis as ‘Wimbleton’!) and is no longer considered essential. The continued success of ‘shock jock’ Kyle Sandilands on radio and television despite his lack of rounded vowels and the many controversies surrounding his use of taboo subjects on air would have been unthinkable in Australian broadcasting even forty years ago.
- The forces of standardisation
 - Mutual intelligibility – see Kevin Rudd’s sorry speech, which was very carefully pitched for a maximum degree of respect and formality without sacrificing intelligibility to the widest possible range of English users in Australia.
 - Global networks – the prevalence of the internet and other forms of speedy communication worldwide are facilitating a kind of generic English where the transmission and acceptance of linguistic change is increasing at an incredible rate. The adoption of overseas slang and commonly used terms in SAE is occurring faster than ever before so that not only is SAE absorbing features from its Australian context and the social changes occurring there, but also from a far wider range of overseas influences.
 - Technology – see above. The facilitation of change, even the necessitation of change due to technological changes has become remarkably quick. Note the rise of the ‘e’ and ‘i’ prefixes. Initially used as a shortened form of ‘electronic’, the most common letter of the alphabet has gained even more prominence as a semantic unit with the rise of words such as ‘email’, ‘e-commerce’ and even ‘e me’ as shorthand for ‘email me’. The success of the iMac and iPod has also spawned a range of ‘i’ associations, not just for associated software such as iLife and other new technologies from Apple such as the iPad, but even for non-affiliated corporations such as Hyundai who created the iMax and i30 cars.
 - Business – both the need for respectful formal public communication and the requirement of trade for a shared language. The shared construct of ‘public space’ requires a variation in both manners and speech (discourse) and a professional these days is more likely to access the SAE rather than the previously preferred Cultivated variety. (It is interesting to note that of the earliest texts recovered archaeologically, most refer to economic transactions by a wide margin. The need to trade and conduct commerce seems to have always created a need for standardisation in language.)
 - Formal identity creation and public image management – for example, as well as demonstrating a certain graphemic and pragmatic concern when creating a resume or CV, a person will tend to avoid distinctive items or styles that may be part of their idiolect in favour of the more generic, accessible SAE. See also Kevin

- Rudd's sorry speech and other issues pertaining to public personas created by politicians and other entertainers in general.
- Age and the stagnation of language use after one's 20s – it may be an interesting source of speculation for students to question this claim from Prompt 2 by Dr Cox and to ask themselves why, when youth is one of the main forces for creating language change, do language users 'settle down' in their 20s into a discernible accent? Perhaps it is the need to work within a wider spectrum of society as one matures and begins to conduct personal business on a broader scale (eg. employment, buying a house, a car, running their own business, etc.) that prompts people to adopt a more Standard form of language. Perhaps it is because identity has largely been formed by the mid-20s and 'trying on' new dialects is no longer as essential (although the increasing sophistication of multi-literacy use is not to be overlooked here).
 - Aspirational goals of climbing up the social ladder – in a supposedly 'classless' society such as Australia, where one no longer 'has' to use a Cultivated accent, the SAE is more than adequate for most users of whatever background. (Although the distinctive Broad accent is still appropriated by very successful business persons for a range of reasons, for example, see Pauline Hanson, the Aussie Mortgages guy – 'We'll save you' – and Frank Walker of 'National Tiles').
 - Multi-literacy
 - Many users adopt a variety of different social personas and consequently also a variety of language patterns. The personal idiolect is merely one of a range of options which now generally also includes a technoelect and SAE for 'public' use. People in the public eye like Steve Irwin, whose accent was the same regardless of context, are less usual and in large part he got away with it because of his status as 'entertainer'.
 - SAE is a commonly accessible 'second dialect' for various purposes such as business, formal occasions and situations where the social distance is uncertain.
 - What is SAE?
 - Why is a standard variety necessary?
 - How is it changing?
 - Why is it changing?
 - Language as a medium of change not just a reflection of change.
 - Subsystems
 - Phonology
 - Vowel shifts
 - Broad and Cultivated accents being ridiculed, forced to extremes (eg. Kath and Kim and Prue and Trude of *Kath and Kim*) by the increase in what is acceptable in 'Standard' Australian English.
 - Merging of accents, inclusion and adoption of other sounds, eg. Kiwi, US varieties, etc.
 - Morphology
 - Lexical change – new technology words, new words borrowed from other cultures (eg. US bling), shifting of word use and meaning.
 - Regional variation within Australia to Standard forms, eg. pot, schooner, midi.
 - Syntax
 - SAE is relatively straightforward, with a more limited range of options to increase intelligibility.
 - Semantics
 - Generalised vocabulary and commonly accepted meanings increase intelligibility.

- Easily understood, shared culture, stereotypes maintained by language because they are easily conveyed.
- Why are some colourful slang usages promoted from the Broad variety and accepted into general use, while others wither and decay as ‘old-fashioned’, eg, Australian rhyming slang, ‘a few sandwiches short of a picnic’, etc?
- Role of advertising in supporting and promoting certain phrases and images into the national consciousness, eg. ‘happy little Vegemites’ or ‘avagoodweegend’.
- Discourse
 - Reasons for use of SAE – formality, conformity, respectability, intelligibility.
 - What does it say about Australians when we will tolerate certain features in our Standard English, eg. crudity/dysphemism and overly informal modes of address such as ‘where the bloody hell are you?’
 - Are we racist like Pauline Hanson, or sexist like Sam Newman because their language is tolerated in a public sphere? Is their language Standard?

Tips

- *Some discussion of why Standard forms of language evolve will be necessary and, in particular, the features of Standard Australian English, such as simpler syntax for greater understandability, greater formality than Broad varieties but less formality/prestige than Cultivated forms, the rise of globalisation adding to the pressures on language to conform, multi-literacies and the ability of language users to adopt/access more than one variety of language would be beneficial (though not all necessary!).*
- *VCAA advice is that students can choose, if they so desire, to use only one of the prompts. They must use **at least** one.*
- *Below are sample paragraph structures, to be used as a guide only – other structures are also acceptable.*
 - *A close reference to the source material (particularly the second prompt.*
 - 1 SAE
 - 2 Aboriginal English
 - 3 Ethnocultural AE
 - 4 teenspeak and its affect on language
 - 5 the changing role of Broad and Cultivated varieties.
 - *A reflection on the relationship between the Australian identity and language features (still fairly easily tied to the prompts).*
 - 1 SAE as the benchmark for national identity/use and its role as a ‘second dialect’ accessed by many in the public sphere
 - 2 Australian identity as casual/informal and inclusive (positive aspects of Broad features entering the SAE)
 - 3 Australian identity as racist, crude and exclusive (negative aspects of Broad stereotypes and language features)
 - 4 modernisation of SAE by technological change (new horizons).
 - *Paragraphs could be structured around the explicit recognition and analysis of the processes of change*
 - 1 mutual intelligibility
 - 2 globalisation and trade connections
 - 3 technology
 - 4 respectful formality/public language without the negative connotations of Cultivated variety.

Each paragraph would then need to involve analysis of how these usages enter SAE and reflect changing social values (and what new values they reflect).

- *Paragraphs could be structured around subsystems but students would need to be careful not to get sidetracked from the 'social change' aspects of the topic*
 - 1 phonology*
 - 2 morphology*
 - 3 lexicology*
 - 4 semantic/discourse use.*
- *Focus and examples should mainly be drawn from Australian use of language and the Australian media.*

Total 30 marks

Mark allocation

- **28–30** – Demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the essay topic. Provides detailed discussion and supports key points with relevant examples or evidence. Excellent analysis using metalinguistic tools accurately. Tightly structured with confident and assured use of paragraphs and topic sentences. Extensive vocabulary and accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- **24–27** – Demonstrates a good understanding of the essay topic. Provides detailed discussion and supports key points with relevant examples or evidence. Very good analysis using metalanguage. Well structured and demonstrates skill in the use of paragraphs, topic sentences, vocabulary and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- **20–23** – Demonstrates a good understanding of the essay topic. Provides some detailed points of discussion and mostly supports these points with examples or evidence. Analysis of ideas is largely expressed in metalinguistic terms. Structure demonstrates appropriate use of paragraphs and topic sentences. Vocabulary and accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation are used correctly.
- **16–19** – Demonstrates some understanding of the topic. Provides some discussion and some points are supported by examples or evidence. Analysis is not sustained throughout the essay and metalanguage is used infrequently or incorrectly. Structure demonstrates appropriate use of paragraphs and topic sentences. Vocabulary and accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation are mainly used correctly.
- **12–15** – Demonstrates some understanding of the topic. Provides some discussion but the key points are often generalised, superficial or repetitive and often not supported with examples or evidence. More descriptive than analytical and metalanguage is rarely used or absent. Structure demonstrates some use of paragraphing and topic sentences. Vocabulary and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation are used infrequently or inconsistently.
- **8–11** – Demonstrates a basic understanding of the topic. Provides limited discussion of two or three points which are not supported by examples or evidence. Descriptive rather than analytical and metalanguage is not used. Poor structure with little use of paragraphing and topic sentences. Vocabulary is basic and accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation are rarely used.
- **5–7** – Little understanding of the topic. Provides limited discussion of one or two points which are not supported by examples or evidence. Little or no analysis given and metalanguage is not used. Poorly structured writing with minimal use of paragraphing and topic sentences. Vocabulary is limited and accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation are rarely used or absent.
- **2–4** – No evidence of understanding of the topic. One or two points are mentioned but not supported by examples or evidence. No use of metalanguage. No use of paragraphs or topic sentences. Vocabulary is poor and accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation are mainly absent.
- **0–1** – No attempt is made to address the topic. Nothing, or only a few words, are written. No use of metalanguage, paragraphs and topic sentences. Accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation are absent.

General Suggestions:

- Clarity of expression and in the organisation of material is still essential. Use of strong topic sentences at the start of paragraphs to establish connection to the question is advised.
- Examples to back up points should be included in every paragraph.
- Students should try to ensure that they remain focussed on using appropriate and detailed metalanguage and linguistic terminology to frame both their examples and their discussion in general.
- A brief conclusion and summary of main points and the student's 'position' regarding the topic is highly recommended. It is the student's final opportunity to express their overall concept and display their skills and knowledge to the examiners.
- Despite the recent absence of a specific direction in the VCAA exams to include at least two different subsystems in their discussion, students are still best advised to ensure that they do so.
- Remind students of the new emphasis on stimulus material. They 'must' refer to the prompts.
- Teachers should refer to the marking criteria as published for exam essays by VCAA in the 2009 examiners report.

END OF SAMPLE RESPONSES

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